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15 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT: EXCOM Issues

The following are my personal views on the various EXCOM issues involving photo reconnaissance.

Budget Issue No. 1 - OXCART

I am strongly in favor of continuing the OXCART program regardless of the status of the SR-71 program. In my view the capabilities of these two vehicles are quite different. The broad area coverage capability of the OXCART, combined with high resolution, is likely to be important in most intelligence problems against which it might be used.

Budget Issue No. 2 - TAG BOARD Drones

I can foresee the possibility that it might be desirable to employ the TAGBOARD if an OXCART or SR-71 is lost to SAMs. It would appear, however, that such a decision would be influenced more by the attitude of political authorities in Washington than by the objective facts, and I would suspect that the TAGBOARD would be more vulnerable to SAMs than would either of the manned vehicles. If we tried to use the TAGBOARD as our primary reconnaissance vehicle over North Vietnam we might get into a very expensive program of doubtful value. On the whole I would be against any increase in the TAGBOARD program at this time.

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